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[Miranda Legge]

Right, well, let's start today's session with a question. Now, let me know in the chat box, have you ever used drama techniques with your young language learners in class? Let me know in the chat box, have you used them well? Do you use them in every session? Do you sometimes use them?

Or have you never used drama before? Or do you maybe think if I mention the word drama, do you think, oh, no, the idea of an end of school performance, the stress, the extra work, the rehearsals, the mess. Let me know if you think that. Or maybe you think, well, English through drama, it's not really serious learning, is it? It creates a bit of classroom chaos.

The children will get too excited and well, I don't have time. I've got a lesson planned to get through and I don't have time for drama. Or maybe I'm, I'm a teacher, I'm not an actor. Let me know if you can relate to any of these comments. I've got lots of Sometimes, yes, you're using it very often.

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Yes, sometimes. That's great. Love it, love it, love it, love it. Well, the funny thing is about drama that for some of us using it in class to teach English, it might seem quite alien, but in reality, we're using it a lot more often than actually maybe we think, what about when we teach our own children their first language, do we sit them down one day and say, right to our toddlers, our babies, right, today we're going to look at some grammatical structures and we have a verb test to follow. No, we don't.

We sing, we use rhymes, we tell stories, we play with puppets, we pretend, we role play. And that. What is that? It's basically drama, right? So if we are using drama based techniques already to teach our own children their first language, it's quite logical and simple and natural to use those same techniques in teaching a second language or a third or a fourth.

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Also learning a new language to speak it confidently, I think is a lot like how we learn how to swim. For example. Here we are, we're going to go swimming. I need to learn how to swim. What do we do?

We can look at all of the videos, the swimming videos online imaginable. So we could look on YouTube, follow all those videos, learn how to use our arms, our hands, how to flip our feet. We could study all of the textbooks in the world about swimming techniques. We could even take tests on swimming. Right?

But can we swim? Because it isn't actually until we get into the water and we get those opportunities to practice what we're learning that, that is when we start making real progress and really fast. And that basically is what drama can do in the English language classroom. It

helps children feel really emerged in the language and it creates a space for speaking. And also it develops those soft skills like communication, creativity, teamwork, self expression, and confidence.

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And the best part is that you can use drama with your young language learners, even if they have very limited skills, because they can use their bodies, their gestures, their faces, their emotions, their imagination. Communication becomes much bigger than just words. And what about our younger learners? Those students who may be a little bit not shy, but the quiet learners, the ones that hover a little bit at the back of the classroom. Drama is perfect for them because it allows them to, yes, to step into a role and adopt a character, whether it's a proud pirate or a scary witch or a crazy chef.

All of these just really allow students, and it gives them the freedom to express themselves, to try out, to improvise, to make mistakes, and to explore language in real situations. A character, a costume can also help children hide behind something so they feel safe. And this extra safety makes them, well, gives them a bit more courage to step out of their comfort zone. And when they're speaking actually through a character, it has an amazing effect on them because if they make a mistake, which is quite normal that they do make mistakes, they don't say, oh, no, panic, I made a mistake. Oh, no, no.

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They just naturally think, ah, I made a mistake. It doesn't matter. It's not me that's making the mistake, it's the character. And that in itself can be so freeing for children. Now, the big question is, though, is where do we start?

If we have never used drama in the classroom before, we're not actors, we're teachers. We. Where do we start? Do we just give our students a lay script and get them acting out in front of the audience or start preparing an end of school performance? And the answer is no, don't do it.

Because it can be counterproductive. One, because when you, as soon as you give a script to children, they go, they're not free or independent. Their eyes are on the script and they're reading every single letter. Many young language learners can't yet read or write very well, and so that gives. Makes them feel even more apprehensive and their pronunciation goes out of the window and they feel completely blocked.

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So what we want to try and do is forget about play scripts for the moment and think about drama more as a journey, a journey of exploration that Gives space for children to grow their confidence in speaking. So we're going to try and combine little bite sized chunks of drama into our lessons to really help support our lessons. So whether it is introducing a new vocabulary, we can use some drama to support that or whether we are reviewing target language, we can use drama activities to review as well. How do we do it? You might be asking me.

I'm going to show you right now. So let's have a look at the topics that we are going to discover and explore this afternoon. Topic number one, drama setup essentials. I'm now, in a few seconds I'm going to introduce you to how to set up your classroom and incorporating drama into your English language lessons and how to manage our students. Classroom management.

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We're going to look at that in just a second. We'll also look at number two, warm up and speak up. How do we actually warm up our students? What kind of exercises do we do in our very first lessons that make us feel really relaxed and also our students? I'm going to share with you four icebreakers that you can do with your students straight away and we'll finish this afternoon with a role play.

Let me know in the chat box. Have you ever attempted to do role play with your young language learners or has it been a hot sticky mess? Let me know. Yes, well, yes, yes, yes. Yeah, we've got, we've.

Yeah, I love it. We do. Have you done role play where for example, you felt a little bit uncomfortable? Maybe children feel a bit overwhelmed with so much language or they feel a bit uncomfortable acting out in front of the class? Have you ever tried role play with Even your preschoolers?

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4 year olds? Is it possible to get a 4 year old coming in and acting out in front of an audience? Absolutely it is. And I'm going to show you a really super simple role play that you can try out straight away with your students. Oh, I love that.

Yes, yes, yes. You do role play? Of course. Of course. Yes, definitely.

Okay, great. So let's go and look at number one. Let's look at step. Step number one, drama Set up essentials. Now I'm going to give you five quick strategies of how to set up your classroom and set up your students for success.

Okay, first, number one, where do we do drama? Drama you can do anywhere. But the best place, if possible is in an open space. So we're not having children sitting behind desks. If possible, they're up on their feet because then they have time to the space to express themselves a bit more Freely.

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So if you do have tables and chairs in your classroom, just get your students at the beginning of the class, one minute. Okay, help me push all the chairs and the tables out of the way and ba, ba. There we have our open space. Now instead, with young language learners, instead of getting them working in small groups or in pairs, I find it's most, it's better, it's most successful when we're working as one whole team. And working as a circle in a circle is super duper.

Now, I know you're going to say to me, yes, Miranda, I've tried working, getting my students to work in a circle and it doesn't work. They end up making a big blob in the middle of the room. I know it's not easy getting our young language learners to make a circle. It's 10 minutes and you still haven't made a circle. So let's try and set up our students for success and get them to make a circle in, let's say, 10 seconds.

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How do we do it? Well, what really flipped my lessons was when I started introducing a floor mat. Now, not exactly this one, because this is a tiny version, but I started using a PVC floor mat that I would take around to lessons. I just fold it out, two seconds, put it on the floor, and voom. It was a visual guide, a cue for my students to know where to stand in the classroom.

So then I just give a 10 second countdown saying, right, everybody make a circle. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Immediately, they have made the perfect circle. Ready for my next instructions. Now I'm waiting the silence now.

And I haven't got a floor mat, Miranda. Well, you. Not yet you haven't, but you will. Hopefully. What you can use for now is to make a circle.

Some masking tape. If you, to help your students, just put a bit of masking tape. It's made out of paper. Just stick it on the floor, a few crosses in a circle and that will really help give your students an immediate cue to know where to stand, especially when you're moving around in class as well. And you're saying, okay, let's make a circle really quickly, not in half an hour, really quickly in a circle around that guide and boom, they're ready to start the next exercise.

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So that's the first tip. Okay, let me know in the comments if you already have a floor mat or if you use something to delimit your space in your classroom. Step number two, when do we use drama in the English language classroom? To teach a language. Well, instead of.

Let's imagine a lot of the time drama is used as an extra add on. Like, okay, I've now finished my lesson plan. I've got five minutes left. Let's play a fun drama game instead of using drama as a separate identity as a fun playful activity at the end of the lesson. Drama can be such a great and instrumental topic to use in all of our lessons, Whether it is to introduce new language or to review language as well.

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It can be really, really helpful, as I said before. So really instrumental in our language lessons. And I'm going to show you exactly how we can do that in a second. I'm going to give you some examples, okay. Of when to use it and how to use it.

Step number. Step number five. No. Step number three. Multi sensory.

Try to choose multisensory activities when we're using drama because it really helps children explore their bodies. Oral listening, visual, verbal activities. When we're incorporating all of our all of their bodies, they not only are engaged a lot more because we're using all of their senses, but they also find that memorizing language becomes a lot easier. It really helps language stick. And you might say to me, okay, what is a multi sensory kind of drama activity?

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What can we do? I'm going to show you in a second exactly what you can do in your very first lessons. Okay, step number four. How long does a drama activity have to last for? Well, I would recommend around five to seven minutes.

If you teach. Already teach young language learners, you know, they have very short attention so spans, so there's no point in doing an activity that lasts like 20, 30, 40 minutes because the children will be climbing up the walls at the end of it. So we want to try and keep activities short and that will maintain their focus, their energy, their motivation for that length of activity. What kind of activities can you do? I'm going to show you in a second.

Just hang on, hang on, I'll show you. Step number four. Five model. When we are more aware of our own communication skills, when we also ourselves we're going to be choosing multi sensory skill activities for our kids, but also when we're more aware of our communication skills, of using our own bodies, our voices, our energy, our enthusiasm, it becomes a lot easier not only to give out instructions because we can depend a lot more on our bodies and not just verbal instructions, but also when children see that we are enthusiastic about joining in, about participating, we're loving what we are introducing to them. They tend to mirror our behavior Right.

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And they become really enthusiastic and want to join in with us when they see us loving the activity. So modeling, demonstrating activities, using, being aware of our communication skills, our voices, facial expressions is something that's really important. And I know that you already know that already. Yeah. Okay, so those are five starter tips of how to set up your classroom and how to set up your students.

Let's have a look now at step number two, how to warm up our class to speak up. So what we want to try and do in our very first lessons, if we want to use some and start incorporating, combining some drama into our language lessons, is to create a tone, an atmosphere in our class that really encourages our students to want to join in and start speaking up. And one of the best ways we can do that is to start using icebreakers. Now I'm going to give you four different icebreakers. Now I'm going to give you examples that you can try out in your lessons tomorrow.

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Okay, first of all, though, what is an icebreaker? Well, an icebreaker is just really a starter activity that you can do at the beginning of your very first lesson or at the beginning of all of your lessons. And it really does help set the tone of lessons. So we want to create a tone that is pressure free, it's supportive, it builds trust with our students. It makes them feel comfortable and relaxed.

So think, oh, yeah, I really like this. And so when they are relaxed, that is when they start making progress in speaking, when they're apprehensive and feeling, they won't join in. So we want to make them feel comfortable. So let's go dive straight into our four icebreakers. Number one, let's go.

This is when we need our floor mat on the floor because we're going to get our students in a circle. Our very first lesson, we've never used drama before. Our floor mat. And we are simply going to. Here's the first activity.

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It's called islands and sharks. And we have a shark right here. Right here. Just for this exercise, Islands and sharks. The objective is we're going to make human islands with our students.

So I'm just going to simply have my students in a circle. And I'll say, I want you to make an island of two. And I'll immediately go and grab a student. And I will say, one, two. That's it.

Now I want you to make an island of three. Grab one student. One, two. And I'll grab another student. Three.

So one, two, three. Now I want you to make an island. An island of two. And you're going to encourage your students to grab a student, even if they don't know each other. There's a get to know you exercise.

Grab a student to make an island of two, then encourage them to make an island of three together, an island of four. So there are four students all in one group and they have to count 1, 2, 3, 4. In English, obviously. Now there will be some students who might not fit on an island and that's great because what they can do, and you are going to model this for them on the floor mat, is they are going to become the sharks. The sharks.

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Where I'm looking at, there is a shark behind me. They're going to become the sharks and you're going to encourage them to start swimming on the floor. Remember, you're going to demonstrate first of all, otherwise they won't do it. They won't join in. If you say, right swim and they say no, you say right swim and you show them they will.

Okay, then you just carry on through the activity. 1, 2, 4, 5. Just for five minutes. This is a perfect icebreaker for your very first activity in teaching English through drama. We're not putting lots of pressure on our students yet, saying, okay, tell the class what your name is.

Tell them where you're from. No, we just want to set a pressure free environment for them to feel relaxed and comfortable to join in. Okay, are you still with me? Let me know you're still with me in the chat box. Exercise number two, Name dance.

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So let's imagine this is my first lessons. I want to introduce some greetings and I simply want to practice the phrase, my name is. In a circle around your floor mat, all of your students, so you can see them, they can see you. And simply step into the circle and say, my name is Miranda. Everybody together, repeat, my name is Miranda.

Then the student next to you, you're going to ask them to do the same thing. They're going to introduce themselves with the phrase my name is, but they're going to imagine and use a different gesture. So it could be, for example, my name is Pietro. Something really simple like that. Yes.

So just saying what their name is and an action and we are all then going to repeat, my name is Pietro. Okay, five minutes. You go round the circle, Everyone has a chance to take part, introduce themselves really quickly. Five minute icebreaker. That's it.

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What's happening? Children are smiling, they're feeling relaxed, they feel that they're not put under pressure too much and they're using the whole of their bodies It's a multisensory activity. Activity number three. Character walks. Again, we're standing in a circle around our mat.

Okay, this time I want to carry on with greetings. So I want to say, nice to meet you with a handshake. I'll step into the circle. I'll go and meet. I'll ask another student to come towards me, and I'll say, nice to meet you, and we'll separate.

I'll take his place, he'll take mine. So we just swap places around the circle. Invite everybody to come and meet each other in the circle and shake hands and say, nice to meet you. Nice to meet you and swap. I want to introduce.

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With that, I want to add on. Nice to meet you after you've done that a few times. Some adjectives, some emotions. So it could be nice to meet you still, but happy. Meet you and swap places.

Nice to meet you and so what places Angry.

Nice to meet you and swap places. Really simple. And you're demonstrating together. You're playing the activity together with your students. You're not acting out, doing.

You're not doing a Shakespeare monologue. It's really simple stuff. And you can do it because you do it every day with them. I'm sure Character walks. You can transform that into.

Also, nice to meet you, but an old lady. Nice to meet you. Swap places. A robot. Nice to meet you.

Nice to meet you. Swap places. That's it. Okay. Multisensory.

Will the children. Will our students remember this language at the end of the lesson? Nice to meet you. My name is. Yes.

Because we are combining this multisensory activity together with the target language of our lessons. So simple to do. Okay, last exercise. Let's do number four. Exercise number four.

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Good morning, king. Now, for this, I need my crown. I feel so much better when I have my crown on. Oh, yes. Right.

So now I'm ready for this exercise. Have your students sitting down around the circle this time. It's a concentration activity. Now, your students probably don't know each other's names yet, so you're simply going to go around the circle with your wand. Because you need a wand.

Every classroom needs a wand. And you're going to say girl. Boy. Girl. Boy. Illicit. Boy. Girl. Boy. Girl. Boy. Girl. Girl. Okay, so we all know boy, girls. That's the first thing to set up.

We're going to also practice this phrase. Good morning, king. Who am I? Together. Good morning, king.

Who am I? Practice it a few times. So they're all familiar with the phrase. Then we're going to ask for a volunteer to be the king. So here I have my ready made volunteer.

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Yes. And we also need a blindfold. So the objective of this activity is we're going to put the crown and the blindfold on this student. We're going to ask for another volunteer to come up, sit down in front of them and they're going to repeat the phrase, Good morning, King. Who am I?

The King's goal is to identify the voice so just through listening and guess if that participant is a girl or a boy. So when the volunteer comes up, they want to try and disguise their voice. Obviously it's part of the game. So they're going to say good morning, King. Who am I?

Is it a boy or girl? They have to guess. Or they could say good morning, King. Who am I? Yes. Is it a girl or boy? Let's have a look. Is it a boy? No, it was a girl. Oh no.

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But good try. Swap over. Have another volunteer playing the king and another playing the volunteer disguising their voice. Will children want to join in in this activity? Absolutely.

Well, I had them with me anyway over the past 25 years, so hopefully they will with you too. Let me know in the comments. Now, which one of these icebreakers you are going to try out in your classes tomorrow? Are you going to try out the islands and sharks or the name dance? The character walk or the king?

Good morning, King. Let me know in the comments. We've got all we've got. King, you've made, you've made our day today. Oh, lovely.

The king. All of the. I know the king. It's, it's the crown. It's the crown.

I know. We want to feel royal, don't we? Yeah, it's the crown. It's the crown. Character walks.

The king. Love it. Okay, so there are examples of role, not of role play, of icebreakers. Okay, Right, what are we doing though? We are still combining our language.

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We've got our target language, but we're just using drama to encourage children to speak up, to get involved, to want to speak up and to boost their speaking confidence. That's what we want. Okay, right, let's get on to our next topic of the day, which is role play. Now let me know in the chat box. We're all.

We're still with the king, aren't we? Yeah, the king. Let me know in the chat box if you have ever tried role play in your classes before. Has there ever been felt like a big hot sticky mess? Too much language that we're Asking them to memorise too much language that they, they can't remember.

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When you have children up acting in front of the class, there are other children climbing up the walls. The engagement takes too much time of our lessons. There are lots of challenges with role play. I know. So let me give you a super simple, quick role play that you can do with your students straight away, that you can also do with your preschoolers with your, let's say four year olds, getting them up in front of an audience.

Yes, that's what we want to try and do. So I'm going to introduce you to our role play. I need another, I need another costume for this. Let me know in the comments where you think we're going for this role play. Let me know in the comments where we're going.

Which role play are we going? Where are we going? The kitchen. Oh, thank you very much. We have got the restaurant.

You got it. And one. Well done. Okay. Going to the restaurant today.

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Now, authentic materials used in class are a great thing to use, as you all probably know, even if it's just a hat, a tray. But what about if we have. Right, hey, we have la la la la. We have our restaurant in miniature. We've got a miniature restaurant.

Can you all see that? Let me see if you can see that. Okay. Right, so authentic materials. Even if we bring in a real orange to class, do you find us students just go, oh, it's an orange.

So authentic materials. We don't have to bring in real food, but we can bring in some play food or we can just use flashcards here. I've got some play food. I've got a hamburger and I've got some more food. And let's imagine we're going to the restaurant.

I have just covered with my young language learners and a couple of other lessons, I've introduced food and so I want now them to practice food in a real situation or semi real situation. So we're going to the restaurant to really practice using food at the restaurant. Okay. So I said we can elicit the food because they're a little bit more familiar with it. So what's this hamburger?

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What's this cheese? And then we've got. What's this fish? So you can go through all of your, your food. We've got watermelon, milk.

And you also need to make some price cards for your food. So here we have a price card. So that's going to cost £5 for that cheese. We've got £1 for the fish. It's a Cheap restaurant, this one and £10 for the hamburger.

Very expensive, that one. So we want simple prices as well. Don't incorporate 16.75 because that will just be too complicated for our young language learners. So keep the prices 1, 5, 10, something they can recognize place. We also want to give something a bit fun for our customers that are going to come to the restaurant.

So we want to give them some money to spend at the restaurant. Now don't do what I did to start off with when I was role playing and I gave them paper money because they just eat it and we don't want eaten. So try and do well. What I discovered I found poker chips were perfect for this activity. So we've got ten, well, we've got ten euro here, but can be ten pounds.

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Got five pounds and one to reflect the prices on the, on the price tags. These are great also because they're color coded so you've got green, red and white in case they don't recognise the numbers. Okay, so you're going to give your students some money and you're going to invite a volunteer to come up to be the customer. Now when the volunteer comes up, you could give the customer, for example, a hat to wear or hold a handbag. Something that they can feel a bit of the character.

You don't need a full blown costume, but something they can feel with the character. They come up, you are going to say the first phrase, hello. And they're going to answer to you, hello. And you will simply say, what would you like? Everybody together, what would you like?

Really simple. They're going to repeat with you and you're going to clap out the phrase because that makes it more of a chant and it sticks in their memory a lot better than saying hello, how are you? Would you like a table for two? What would you like? Simple volunteer comes up with their money.

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They are going to practice the phrase I would like. I would like. And you're going to ask them to choose the food so they could say I would like the fish, please. Yes, the fish please. I will put the fish on the tray.

I've got the tray over there. And I will say hold them, give them the fish. That's one pound, please. They will give me the money. One pound.

I will take the money, put out the, the till, open the till, put the money in the till, give them a receipt and the fish and say, here you are, thank you, thank you, goodbye, bye, bye. They go and sit down and they eat their delicious meal. That is it. Is it simple? Absolutely.

Is it too simple? No, not to start with. Remember, we have time to add on more language later on. We've got plenty of time to add on. I would like the menu, please, for starters, the main course, dessert, the bill, please.

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All of that language. We can add it on a little bit later, but start simple. This way, children will be more engaged and encouraged to come up and take part. They'll remember the language and repeat it. Are we looking for perfect language speakers?

No. What we're trying to do is nurture confident language communicators and a simple role play like this can really help. Let me know in the comments if this is helpful for you. If you're going to try out your restaurant, role play in a very simple way with your language learners. And let me roll out the restaurant.

Take off my. Let's go back to a bit of serious teaching here and let's have a look. Let's do a recap of what we've looked at today. So let's imagine. Where have I got my.

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Don't know where I put it. I've lost it. That doesn't matter. Let's imagine that this is our English drama toolkit. We've discovered a mini English drama toolkit and I've been giving you some different topics to think over, to look over and to explore.

So, first of all, we started with how to set up your drama lessons with your students, how to set up your classroom and your students so that we've got that ingredient in there. We also looked at four icebreakers. What are the very first activities we can do with our students if we have no experience with using drama in class to combine with our normal lessons? So we've got some. Four different icebreakers.

We'll put that ingredient in our toolkit. And we also just looked at a role play, a very simple role play about the restaurant. So we've got that in there too. Now all that's left to add into our toolkit for this, for today is a touch of humour. Our sense of humour goes such a long way with students.

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When students see us laughing and laughing also at ourselves, they will love your lessons. They love it when we are. We use our sense of humour and an element of playfulness. Playfulness is such an important. We need to tap into our inner child and bring out that inner playfulness.

So all that's left is the magic words. Hocus pocus, 1, 2, 3. Give our toolkit a bit of a shake. Think of how we can combine some drama into our lessons and what you'll soon start to see by mixing up a few of these ingredients and lessons that you will start to see that your children speaking progress and confidence really starts to bloom and grow. Let me know in the comments what activity you are going to try out tomorrow.

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I really hope that you enjoyed today's session. And just before you go, if you would like to. Let me drop that. If you would like to know how to discover some more English through drama tips and tricks and teaching English through drama, you can find me at Kids English Theatre Online. I'm on socials on Facebook and Instagram and YouTube and TikTok.

I'm also a newbie on LinkedIn and it would be great to connect with you, ask me some questions, try out the activities, let me know how you get on with them. I would really, really love to hear from you. So thank you again for taking part in today's session. Thank you.

[Nathan Waller]

Thank you so much. And I wasn't kidding at the beginning. I think what a treat for everybody this session has been. I'm going to leave the hearts flowing up the screen. They're fantastic. Thank you so much, everybody for your participation and all of these and all of your engagement in the chat box.

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It's been really, really lovely to see. You never became the Queen of England, but you became the King of hearts and thumbs up.

[Miranda Legge]

The next best thing. It was the next best thing. Nathan, what can you do?

[Nathan Waller]

So, and there's a couple of, there's a couple of takeaways and kind of questions, but things that we can discuss. Somebody was asking about, they've asked about lesson plans for drama lessons. I think I, I, perhaps we, maybe we need to clarify it. So there's nothing you're not, it's not, let me get the right words. It's not drama in English, it's adding elements of drama into your English class.

Right? Yeah. Yeah. Okay, good.

[Miranda Legge]

Absolutely. Absolutely. So whatever it's trying to. Because otherwise sometimes you think, oh, I've got to throw out all of what I'm doing already in my lessons and just start immediately, just incorporating only drama. No, what you can do is just enhance and combine. Enhance what you're already doing the target language that you're already studying with your students, but bringing in elements of drama to support that language.

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So drama activities that can really help practice that language that you are studying with your students. So it's not about just acting in English, it's something different.

[Nathan Waller]

Yeah, okay. Yeah, that's really clear. Because you want to, you want to engage them.

Right. So teachers are looking for opportunities to do what they're already doing in more engaging, more playful ways to help different types of students to attach themselves to the activities, to the language, and feel a different type of confidence in using it.

[Miranda Legge]

Absolutely. And absolutely. Because children also, they have.

Well, you know, research shows us that children have different learning styles, so there are some students who can't really keep still for very long in learning. They. They feel a lot more comfortable when they're being physical, when they're moving around. And drama can really help by keeping structure to the lessons, still reviewing target language or introducing target language, but allowing children to move around. There are other children who are very oral, so through chants and songs and storytelling, some children are really verbal, so allowing them to speak more through skits, for example, or also being visual.

00:37:39

Today, I haven't used slides, for example, but I know to try and keep your attention even as adults, I need to use some authentic material, some props to really keep your engagement for a whole half an hour as well. So it's the same thing with children. The more different props that we can use or flashcards or authentic materials. It really does help maintain their engagement and their motivation for longer and their focus for longer.

[Nathan Waller]

And I think that relates a little bit to some of the other comments that people were making about having large class sizes, limited space, disruptive students, quite often depending on where people are teaching.

But so I think that these. These activities, because they're so simple, like little icebreakers, little activities, little role plays, you can kind of just like splash them in, Right? Just to kind of.

00:38:30

[Miranda Legge]

Yeah, just.

[Nathan Waller]

Just to kind of change the energy in the room, I guess.

[Miranda Legge]

Exactly. Exactly. You're spot on, Nathan. I mean, you've. You've got so much experience yourself as well, you know, that it's changing different energies during the class.

As I said before, keeping. Even when we're studying text, we're learning through textbooks. Studying for more than 10 minutes. 7. 10 minutes with young language learners is a lot to demand from them.

So if you're chopping and changing your lessons with combining a little energizer in between, a brain break of some kind that can still support language, but it helps children to break up that learning structure throughout the lesson and not only keeps their motivation, their energy and focus, but it also helps us because it becomes a lot easier for us to teach as well.

00:39:17

[Nathan Waller]

Yeah. And so we're going to run out of time. But I mean, a lot of people were mentioning teens. I know this was geared quite heavily towards young learners.

Those activities and the language that you were using. But I mean, for me, I think that you can definitely use these for teens. And in fact, it might actually kind of shock them out of, like, oh, I wasn't expecting that. Like, actually, this is kind of fun. This is kind of cool.

Like, teams are bright and smart and creative that I think schools allow on them, that they. It's all about exams and getting your certificates. But actually, they want to do a lot of these things.

[Miranda Legge]

Absolutely. And they need it because, as I was saying to you before, Nathan, I have friends who, when I speak with them, I know that their English is fantastic.

Their grammar, their reading, their writing, you know, emails, their spelling is so much better than mine. You know, mine's really bad. But when they actually come to speak, it's like they panic. They say, I'm sorry about my speaking. I really freeze up.

00:40:16

You know, I know I train also business people who freeze up when they have to speak in public, on a stage in English. And that's not because they don't know the language, but it's just because they haven't had that practice in speaking it and they haven't built their confidence in speaking it. So the. The younger the children are, the better that we start getting them used to speaking up in front of their classmates, you know, in a very informal situation. But they are our future public speakers, our students and teens, especially when, as I said before, our goal isn't to become perfect language speakers, but confident language communicators.

And the more opportunities we give also our teens to speak in class using different little mini. I use, for example, lots of comedy skits with students, both with primary students and teens, because when you're using humour, when you can start making them laugh, they're even more focused and they want to join in even more when they can laugh and play. And the thing is with teens is that we just have to change our tone. With younger children, we have a certain tone and a certain way of communicating. And with teens, we just have to change our way of communicating and our tone so they don't feel that whatever we're doing with them feels babyish.

00:41:31

The language still needs to be simple. It's not because they're teens, we have to make it really complicated language just because they're teens. That can still be simple language, but we have to really peel it back, keep it simple. But our tone has to be in a certain way that they don't feel. They're doing exercises that are babyish.

That's an important thing with teens. They don't want to do anything that's babyish. No Heads and Shoulders, please.

[Nathan Waller]

We love Heads and Shoulders.

[Miranda Legge]

We do.

I love Heads and Shoulders. I do.

[Nathan Waller]

And the audience doesn't need to just take our word for it. I'm seeing comments in the chat box that they've used these ideas with teens and they have worked. So in the.

00:42:07

Out in the real world, people doing this, it works. In fact, it's just kind of reminded me of something, actually. I remember speaking about this in another webinar. If you're teaching teens and you feel like you want to do this with them, go and talk to the primary school teachers in your school, because when those kids come to your class, they'll be prepped for this kind of stuff. Right. So work as a team across the whole.

[Miranda Legge]

Absolutely, absolutely.

[Nathan Waller]

And get them to incorporate more role play, get them to do the usefulness of drama, because you will benefit from that when they. When they come through the school. So that's a good tip as well.

[Miranda Legge]

Absolutely. Totally agree. We're just using drama to support what we're already doing in class. Not as a separate identity, but just help support what we're doing and what we like doing in class or the curriculum that we have to follow because we don't have any choice but to use it to support what they're learning. That's.

00:43:00

That's as simple as that. Not to become these Hollywood stars, but just to use drama in a very simple and playful way to get. To boost speaking confidence. Communication, confidence. That's what we like.

[Nathan Waller]

Miranda, thank you so much. I wish we could continue the discussion. There's. There's.

[Miranda Legge]

Be here all day. I think I'll stay here all day. Yeah.

[Nathan Waller]

We could talk about so many things with parents, we could talk about all sorts of things, but we don't have time. And I'm going to leave you rest because you have a third session coming up later this evening, which is very late for you, so I'm going to wish you the best of luck with that because I'm in Dubai, so I will be fast asleep, sadly, for this one. But on behalf of the audience, again, look at the.

The hearts and the celebrations, the thumbs up. Everybody's, I think, would love to be you. I think everyone wants to go back to being like 8 years old and join your class. Move to Florence.

[Miranda Legge]

Come to. Come, come, come. The doors are always open.

[Nathan Waller]

I would definitely recommend. Yeah, Connecting with Miranda on LinkedIn, on Instagram, those pages, follow them. There's tons and tons of tips in there as well.

And also follow macmillan education while you're there, because plenty of things there as well.

[Miranda Legge]

Absolutely, 100%. Thank you so much to you, Nathan, to Macmillan, to everybody, the organization, and of course, to all of you teachers for being here, for taking your time out to follow the sessions. It's been absolutely wonderful to have all of you here. Thank you so much.

[Nathan Waller]

Our pleasure. Enjoy the evening and we'll see you soon.